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## Escondido Bomb/Arson Investigation Update

On Sunday, 11-21-10, a combined Bomb Squad consisting of personnel from the Sheriff's Department, the F.B.I. and the San Diego Fire Department, along with representatives from County HazMat, made a limited entry into the main residence located at 1954 Via Scott in Escondido. The interior of the house was extremely cluttered making movement and observation extremely difficult. The house contained unstable material both in containers and in loose form. Additional hazardous materials were observed. The clutter, the small operating space, and the unstable material made it too dangerous to proceed and the combined team ceased all operations.

On Wednesday, 11-24-10, the bomb squad entered the house to recover evidence. The evidence collection was extremely difficult due to the hazardous conditions. Various items of evidence, as authorized by the search warrant, were located and recovered. Due to the ongoing nature of the criminal investigation, the exact items seized will not be made public. The items seized were related to bomb making as well as items suggestive of armed robberies. Additionally, the bomb technicians discovered more explosive material including suspected HMTD, PETN and blasting caps within the house. Those items were not removed due to the extreme danger associated with their movement. Subsequent to the evidence recovery, County HazMat recovered a cache of hazardous chemicals from a storage area outside the main residence. Approximately 4 liters of hydrochloric acid, 1 liter of nitric acid, 25 gallons of sulfuric acid and 50 pounds of hexamine were recovered and removed from the property.

Proactive operations on site have been suspended and will remain suspended until further notice. Explosive material and hazardous chemicals remain within the house. The Sheriff's Department is working with local, state and federal agencies to refine the Incident Action Plan prior to any further activities. Although the risks involved with both the chemicals and the explosive materials cannot be eliminated, the goal is to reduce the risks by utilizing the appropriate tactics, techniques and procedures. Subject matter experts from various disciplines are working together to develop a mitigation strategy that accounts for both public safety and environmental protection. Local, state and federal subject matter experts are being consulted to

help insure that “best practices” are utilized in dealing with this unusual and extremely dangerous situation.

At the current time, the situation at the residence has been stabilized and there is no immediate danger to the community. The Sheriff’s department has secured a perimeter around the residence and will continue to do so to help ensure the safety of community members. Via Scott remains closed. Via Alexandra is restricted to residents only. All involved agencies are proceeding with careful deliberation and the utmost caution as they seek to mitigate this hazardous situation in a manner consistent with public safety and environmental protection.

There is no planned on site activity, other than scene protection, at the current time. Due to the lack of activity on scene, the Sheriff will not have a media spokesperson on site. The media will be notified prior to the onset of any on site activity. At this time, activities will most likely not resume until after the first of December. This information was provided by Assistant Sheriff Ed Prendergast of the Sheriff’s Law Enforcement Bureau. Any media inquiries should be made to the Sheriff’s Public Affairs Office at (858) 974-2259.

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